

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 4067

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: ELAB, MARR, GR  
SUBJECT: PAE WORK PERMITS

REF: (A) STATE 119099 (B) ATHENS 3952

1. ON MAY 16 AN EMBOFF DISCUSSED WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE MFA'S WEST EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN SECTION THE CONTINUING DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY EMPLOYEES OF PACIFIC ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS (PAE) IN SECURING WORK PERMITS. EMBOFF PRESENTED THE USG POSITION THAT PAE EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE EXEMPT FROM WORK PERMITS REQUIREMENTS PER PARAS 2 AND 3 OF REFTEL (A). HE ALSO REVIEWED THE TEXT OF THE EMBASSY'S NOTE VERBALE OF MAY 17, 1977 CONCERNING THIS ISSUE AND THE RELEVANT PARAGRAPHS OF APPENDIX I OF THE 1953 MILITARY FACILITIES AGREEMENT.

2. THE MFA OFFICIAL REQUESTED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE VARIOUS DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY PAE EMPLOYEES AT IRAKLION AND HELLENIKON SINCE JULY 1976. IN RESPONSE, EMBOFF NOTED THAT WHILE SEEKING TO RESOLVE THE QUESTION OF THE PAE EMPLOYEES' STATUS, THE EMBASSY HAS ATTEMPTED AS AN INTERIM MEASURE TO INSURE THAT THE PROVISIONS OF GREEK LAW RELATING TO WORK PERMITS ARE APPLIED FAIRLY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY.

3. FINALLY, THE MFA OFFICIAL SAID HE WOULD REFER THE QUESTION TO THE MFA'S LEGAL SECTION, BUT IN THE MEANTIME WOULD DO WHAT HE  
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COULD WITH THE MINISTRY OF LABOR TO PREVENT INORDINATE DELAYS IN PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR WORK PERMITS OR RENEWED WORK PERMITS. HE COMMENTED THAT THE CURRENT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN GREECE AND THE STATUS OF EXISTING BILATERALS -- SUCH AS THE MILITARY FACILITIES AGREEMENT -- MAKE ANY CHANGE IN THE MFA'S LONG-STANDING POSITION ON THIS ISSUE DIFFICULT PENDING RATIFICATION OF THE DEFENSE COOPERATION AGREEMENT (DCA).

4. THE SAME EMBOFF DISCUSSED THE PAE WORK PERMIT ISSUE INFORMALLY WITH THE MFA'S LEGAL ADVISOR, MAHERITSAS, ON MAY 15. MAHERITSAS, WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY STATED THAT PAE'S AMERICAN EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO SECURE WORK PERMITS, SAID THAT HE DOUBTED WHETHER ANY QUESTION CONNECTED WITH THE DCA WOULD BE ADDRESSED BY THE MFA UNTIL AFTER PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS' RETURN FROM THE NATO SUMMIT IN WASHINGTON.

5. CONCERNING THE VIABILITY OF CONVERTING THE BASE MAINTENANCE FUNCTIONS AT HELLENIKON AND IRAKLION TO AN IN-SERVICE OPERATION, WE ARE PUZZLED BY THE PROSPECTIVE INCREASE IN OFFICIAL U.S. NATIONAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES CITED IN PARA 4 OF REFTTEL A. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH LOCAL USAF ELEMENTS THAT ADOPTING AN IN-SERVICE OPERATION WOULD BRING A NET DECREASE IN U.S. NATIONAL CIVILIAN POSITIONS. (WE NOTE THAT THE NUMBER OF U.S. MILITARY POSITIONS REQUIRED FOR AN IN-SERVICE OPERATION HAS NOT BEEN ADDRESSED IN THE REFTTEL.) WE WANT TO MAKE OUR FINAL ASSESSMENT ON THIS COURSE OF ACTION ON THE BASIS OF AGREED MANNING LEVELS FOR BOTH OFFICIAL U.S. NATIONAL CIVILIAN AND MILITARY POSITIONS. AS A GENERAL PREMISE, HOWEVER, A SMALL INCREASE IN THE COMBINED OFFICIAL U.S. CIVILIAN AND MILITARY POSITIONS WOULD BE POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT RESULT IN REDUCTIONS IN THE GREEK WORK FORCE.

6. RE THE SUGGESTION IN PARA 5 OF REFTTEL (A) THAT WE OFFER TO  
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REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PAE'S U.S. NATIONAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES IN RETURN FOR A WAIVER OF WORK PERMIT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE REMAINING U.S. NATIONALS, THE RESPONSE SO FAR FROM THE MFA ON THE WORK PERMIT ISSUE INDICATES LITTLE PRACTICAL HOPE FOR THIS OPTION. AT ANY RATE, WE REQUEST CLARIFICATION OF THE NUMBERS INVOLVED BEFORE DISCUSSING IT WITH THE GOG. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE NOW ONLY 32 "KEY" POSITIONS AT HELLENIKON AND IRAKLION WHICH MUST BE FILLED BY U.S. NATIONALS ACCORDING TO THE USAF CONTRACT WITH PAE. THE REMAINING U.S. NATIONALS EMPLOYED BY PAE WERE HIRED AT PAE'S OPTION, IN MANY CASES, ESPECIALLY AT IRAKLION, BECAUSE NO QUALIFIED GREEK NATIONALS WERE AVAILABLE. IT APPEARS THAT WE WOULD BE OFFERING TO REDUCE PAE'S U.S. NATIONAL WORK FORCE FROM 87 TO 51 EMPLOYEES WHEN PAE'S CONTRACT NOW REQUIRES ONLY 32 U.S. NATIONAL EMPLOYEES.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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